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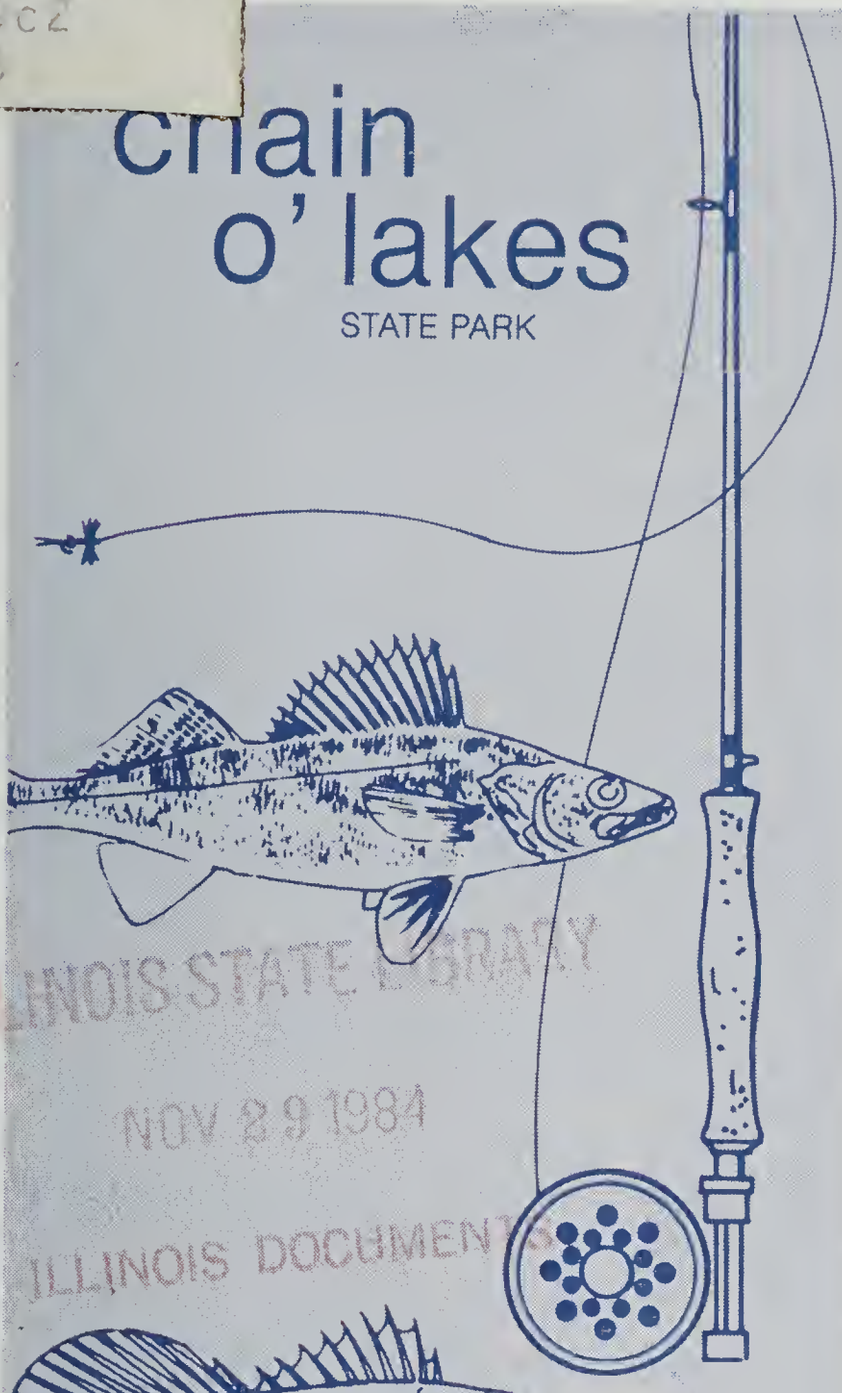
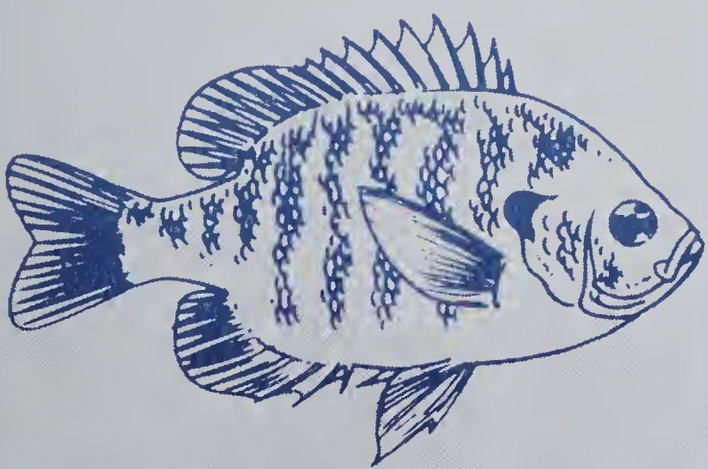
chain o' lakes

STATE PARK





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THE PARK

Chain O'Lakes State Park in northeastern Illinois, is in McHenry and Lake counties 20 miles west of Lake Michigan and 4 miles south of the Illinois-Wisconsin border. The 2,793 acre park and the 3,230-acre conservation area are primarily water and marshland. The area contains Illinois' largest concentration of natural lakes. The State of Illinois purchased the initial acquisition of 840 acres in 1945.

THE LAKES

The state park borders 3 of the 10 lakes in the Fox Chain O'Lakes—Grass, Marie and Bluff. The other 7 lakes in the chain are Fox, Pistake, Channel, Petite, Catherine, Nippersink and Redhead, but they lie outside of the state park area. The lakes have a combined total of 6,465 acres of water and 488 miles of shoreline. The last of the glaciers in this part of the country formed these lakes.

The Fox River intersects the park from the north to south and then flows into the lakes.

HISTORY

Indians: About 1635 when the first Europeans came into the area, the land was inhabited by Indians of the Algonquin linguistic family of the Great Lakes Region. They were the Woodland Indians, mainly Fox and Sauk (sometimes called Sac). These Indians came originally from the vicinity of Quebec and Montreal and had been driven west by the Iroquois. Other tribes around the lakes were the Menomonees, Winnebagoes, Potawatomis and some of the Ottawa and Chippewa tribes who lived with the Potawatomis.

The tribes lived in bark wigwams fashioned by bending poles into dome shapes and covering them with bark. In the wintertime the coverings were sometimes made of mats woven from cattail stalks for added warmth.

Indians used Crabapple Island as a place to exact tribute from other tribes using the channel and because there was good gardening on the island.

The Sauk and Fox Indians were active and courageous in the subjugation of the Illinois confederacy of Indians. In the war with England a party of Sauk and Fox fought on the side of the British. Black Hawk, the famous Sauk chief, fought on the British side in the war of 1812. Abraham Lincoln was one of the young volunteers who enlisted to fight the Indians during the Black Hawk War. Jefferson Davis was reputed to have been a lieutenant in the Army at the time Lincoln was a private in the Illinois militia, and both were reputed

to have been in the Chain O'Lakes area at the same time.

French: In 1673 Jolliet and Marquette traveled the Fox River in their explorations. French traders were the first Europeans to explore the area by canoe. The first European settlement was at Fort Hill, a large mound rising out of the prairie, formerly a lookout point for the Indians.

Purchased Farm: In the 1930's a CCC camp became the Chain O'Lakes Conservation Area and, in 1957, this became Chain O'Lakes State Park. The farm on the park land, purchased in 1969, came into the hands of the Stevens family in 1843 under a land grant to Major Alfred Stevens, who came into the area from Richmond, Virginia, in 1837.

NATURAL FEATURES

The area of Chain O'Lakes State Park is chiefly fresh water bog over deep peat deposits which provides a plant and animal habitat. Land above the bog level is gently sloping to a rise of 200 feet, except for occasional rolling glacier deposits of a variety of silty loams.

Most of the land is covered with sparse to dense timber of such varieties as Scotch pine, oak, cherry, hickory, elm, birch, sumac and spruce. Some of the animals in the region are chipmunks, ground squirrels, gophers, deer, rabbits, mink, opossum, skunk, raccoons and fox.

FACILITIES

Picnicking: Six picnic areas with tables, grills, water and toilets are scattered throughout the park. Playground equipment and a concession stand offering a variety of refreshments, boat rentals, fishing supplies and camp store supplies help to make the outdoor experience enjoyable.

Winter Sports: When the temperature drops and the ice thickens, ice skating and ice fishing are permitted. Sledding and cross country skiing are also very popular. Access to the Fox-Chain O'Lakes can be obtained from the park's boat ramp for snowmobile enthusiats.

Hunting: Pheasants may be hunted by permit only, during the hunting season. The park is closed for all other activities during this period. Waterfowl hunting is allowed on Grass Lake and Nippersink Lake from blinds only. For additional hunting opportunities, contact the site.

Fishing and Boating: Fishing for bluegill, walleye, crappie, bass, northern pike, catfish and bullheads is popular along the river and lake banks within the park. Boat rentals, docks, fishing piers and two launching ramps are also provided. The Fox-Chain O'Lakes has no limit on motor size.

Camping: The Class A area has electricity, disposal stations, flush toilets and showers. The Class B area has water, vault toilets and access to showers. Youth group camping is available to youth groups making advance reservations. All campers must have a permit.

Interpretive Trail: A nature trail, 2¼ miles in length, is available to hiking enthusiasts. Trail guides can be obtained from the park staff.

Keep Your Park Beautiful: The park is for all to enjoy, so help keep it clean. Put all litter in the nearest available trash container. No plants or parts of any tree may be removed or damaged!

AMERICAN LOTUS

The lotus, at one time, covered almost all of Grass Lake, and attracted great crowds of people to view their beauty.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION . . .

Groups of 25 or more persons will not be admitted to any state site unless permission from the site superintendent has been obtained to use the facilities. In addition, groups of minors must have adequate supervision and at least one responsible adult must accompany each group of 15 minors. All pets must be on a leash.

Numerous state sites are within easy access of every part of Illinois. Lodges, cabins and dining rooms are important features of Illinois Beach, Starved Rock, Pere Marquette and Giant City; White Pines Forest has cabins and dining rooms only. Reservations for lodging should be made with lodge managers.

Most state sites are open year round, except on Christmas Day and New Year's Day. When weather conditions necessitate the closing of roads during freezing and thawing periods, access to facilities is by foot only.

For more details on this site, contact the Site Superintendent, Chain O'Lakes State Park, 39947N State Park Road, Spring Grove, 60081, phone 312/587-5512. For information on other land and historic sites facilities, write the Illinois Department of Conservation, Land and Historic Sites, 524 S. Second St., Springfield, Illinois 62706.

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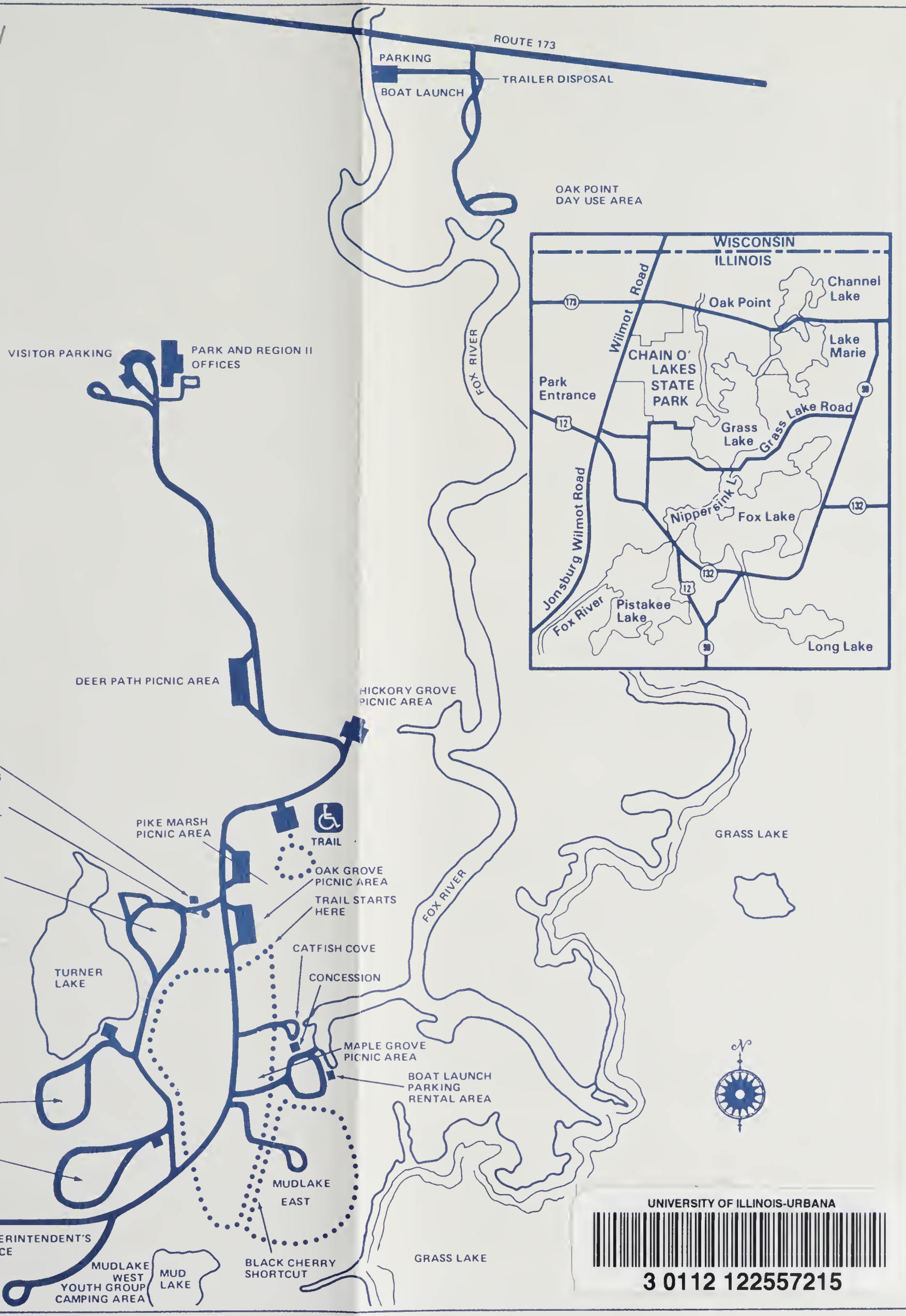

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